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(54) **MOSFET amplifier circuit**

(57) By addition of a compensation circuit comprising an inexpensive MOSFET and a constant current circuit, a MOSFET amplifier circuit is provided at a low cost which is capable of making a drain current of the MOSFET constant to thereby maintain the operational point of an amplifier at an optimal state at all times. The MOSFET amplifier circuit includes a first MOSFET (1), a constant current circuit comprising a variable resistor (7), an operational amplifier (4), a power supply (Vcc) and a resistor (8), a second MOSFET (2) having a constant current generated by the constant current circuit as a drain current (I_{DQ2}) thereof; and a voltage control circuit comprising operational amplifiers (5, 6) and resistors (10, 17) for applying a gate-source voltage (V_{GS2}) of the second MOSFET (2) to the first MOSFET (1) as a gate-source voltage (V_{GS1}) thereof.

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Description

[0001] The present invention relates to an amplifier circuit employing MOSFETs, and in particular, to a circuit for use with a high frequency amplifier circuit employing a MOSFET for compensating for a secular change in a drain current of a MOSFET.

[0002] A drain current I_{DQ} of a MOSFET at the time of no signal input thereto is determined by the magnitude of a gate-source voltage V_{GS} thereof. Fig. 4 shows a V_{GS} versus I_{DQ} characteristic of such a MOSFET. In general, the electric characteristics such as an operational point of a MOSFET vary depending upon the magnitude of a drain current thereof, so with an amplifier employing a MOSFET, the drain current I_{DQ} of the MOSFET is set so as to provide an optimal electrical operational point.

[0003] However, a MOSFET has a so-called "hot carrier" phenomenon that its drain current I_{DQ} changes over time. Fig. 5 illustrates an example of such a secular change in the drain current of a MOSFET with a constant gate-source voltage V_{GS} thereof. As clearly seen from Fig. 5, as the drain current I_{DQ} of the MOSFET changes, the electrical operational point of the MOSFET varies, thus posing a problem that the characteristics of the amplifier having an optimal electrical operational point at the time of the manufacture thereof change over time.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0004] In view of this, the present invention is intended to obviate the above-mentioned problem of the prior art of a change in the operation point of an amplifier due to a change in a drain current of a MOSFET at the time of no signal input, and has its object to provide a MOSFET amplifier circuit which includes a compensation circuit comprising an inexpensive MOSFET and a constant current circuit for making the drain current of the MOSFET constant to thereby maintain the operational point of the amplifier at an optimal state at all the times.

[0005] Bearing the above object in mind, according to the present invention, there is provided a MOSFET amplifier circuit comprising: a first MOSFET; a constant current circuit for generating a current of a constant magnitude; a second MOSFET having a constant drain current controlled by said constant current circuit; and a voltage control circuit for applying a gate-source voltage of said second MOSFET to a gate-source voltage of said first MOSFET.

[0006] With the above arrangement, the voltage control circuit detects, for example, a gate-source voltage of the second MOSFET, amplifies and supplies it to the first MOSFET as a gate-source voltage thereof, whereby a voltage based on a secular change in the gate-source voltage of the second MOSFET, which provides a constant drain current for the second MOSFET, is given to the first MOSFET as its gate-source voltage, thus reducing a change in the drain current of the first MOSFET or making it at a constant value.

[0007] In this regard, it is to be noted that the voltage control circuit has a voltage amplification factor set in such a manner that the detected gate-source voltage of the second MOSFET is amplified in accordance with a difference in magnitude between the secular changes in the first and second MOSFETs, and supplied to the first MOSFET as its gate-source voltage. As a result, according to this invention, employing an inexpensive MOSFET for the second MOSFET, a MOSFET amplifier circuit capable of compensating for the drain current of the first MOSFET can be provided at a low cost.

[0008] In a preferred embodiment of the invention, the voltage control circuit comprises operational amplifiers and a plurality of resistors, and the constant current circuit comprises an operational amplifier, a variable resistor, resistors and a power supply.

[0009] Preferably, the second MOSFET is formed in a chip into which the first MOSFET is built.

[0010] With this arrangement, the secular change characteristics of the first and second MOSFETs can be made substantially the same, thus rendering circuit design easy and simple.

[0011] The above and other objects, features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent to those skilled in the art from the following detailed description of preferred embodiments of the invention taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

In the Drawings:

[0012]

Fig. 1 is a circuit diagram conceptually showing a MOSFET amplifier circuit according to the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a circuit diagram showing a first embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 3 is a circuit diagram showing a second embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 4 is a view illustrating the relationship between a gate to source voltage of a MOSFET and a drain current thereof;

Fig. 5 is a view showing an example of a secular change in the drain current of the MOSFET; and

Fig. 6 is a view showing an example of a secular change in a gate to source voltage of the MOSFET.

[0013] Before describing details of embodiments of the present invention, reference will be made to a general concept of the present invention while referring to Fig. 1.

[0014] Fig. 1 is a circuit diagram conceptually showing the construction of the present invention. In Fig. 1, a MOSFET amplifier circuit constructed according to the principles of the present invention includes a first MOSFET in the form of an amplification MOSFET 1, a second MOSFET in the form of a drain current amplification MOSFET, and a supervisory control circuit 3. The supervisory control circuit 3 includes a constant current circuit and a voltage control circuit of the invention, and operates to supervise or monitor a drain current I_{DQ2} of the second MOSFET 2 and applies a gate-source voltage V_{GS} to the MOSFET 2 as its gate-source voltage so as to control the drain current I_{DQ2} to a predetermined value.

[0015] Fig. 6 illustrates an example of a secular change in the gate-source voltage V_{GS} of the MOSFET 2 when the drain current I_{DQ} of the MOSFET is held constant, as shown in Figs. 4 and 5. In Fig. 6, the abscissa is indicated at a logarithmic scale. When the MOSFET 2 having undergone a secular change is controlled by the supervisory control circuit 3 such that the drain current thereof is held constant, the gate-source voltage V_{GS} of the MOSFET 2 changes as shown in Fig. 6. It is desired that the MOSFET 2 is subjected to the same secular change as the MOSFET 1 undergoes, and an increasing demand for high power amplifiers in recent years results in an increased supply of MOSFETs having high power outputs and enlarged size.

[0016] For these reasons, if the same ones are employed for the first and second MOSFETs 1, 2, the construction and power consumption of the circuitry as a whole will be enlarged or increased. Thus, according to the present invention, a small-sized and inexpensive MOSFET is employed for the second MOSFET 2, and the initial value and the rate of change of the gate-source voltage V_{GS2} of the second MOSFET 2 is corrected or adjusted by the supervisory control circuit 3 so that the drain current of the MOSFET 1 is made constant. The second MOSFET 2 may be achieved by the use of a part of a MOSFET built in a chip of the first MOSFET 1 while utilizing substantially the same characteristics thereof.

[0017] Now, preferred embodiments of the present invention will be described in detail while referring to the accompanying drawings.

Embodiment 1

[0018] Fig. 2 illustrates a circuit arrangement of a MOSFET amplifier circuit according to a first embodiment of the present invention. In Fig. 2, the MOSFET amplifier circuit of this embodiment includes, in addition to a first MOSFET 1 and a second MOSFET 2 which are the same as those shown in Fig. 1, a plurality of operational amplifiers 4, 5 and 6, a variable resistor 7, and a plurality of resistors 8 through 17. In the first embodiment, the relationship between a gate-source voltage V_{GS1} of the first MOSFET 1 and a gate-source voltage V_{GS2} of the second MOSFET 2 is set such that the first MOSFET gate-source voltage V_{GS1} is greater than the second MOSFET gate-source voltage V_{GS2} .

[0019] Here, note that assuming that a voltage at an inverted input terminal of the operational amplifier 4 is represented by "Vref" and the resistance value of the resistor 8 is represented by "Rs", the drain current I_{DQ2} of the MOSFET 2 is represented by "Vref/Rs". The voltage Vref can be adjusted by the variable resistor 7 so that the drain current I_{DQ2} is made to a prescribed value by means of the variable resistor 7. Also, assuming that the drain to source voltage of the MOSFET 2 is represented by a constant value V_{D2} , the voltage supply V_{CC} is represented by the following equation:

$$V_{CC} = V_{D2} + I_{DQ2} \times R_s$$

The operational amplifier 4 controls the gate-source voltage V_{GS2} of the second MOSFET 2 such that the drain current I_{DQ2} of the second MOSFET 2 is always held at a prescribed value even if the MOSFET 2 is subjected to a secular change.

[0020] The operational amplifier 5 operates to match the rate of change of the gate-source voltage V_{GS2} of the second MOSFET 2 with that of the gate-source voltage V_{GS1} of the first MOSFET 1. Thus, assuming that the resistance values of the resistors 11, 12 are represented by "R₁₁", "R₁₂", respectively, the output voltage Vout1 of the operational amplifier 5 is represented by the following formula:

$$V_{out1} = -(R_{12}/R_{11}) \times V_{GS2} \quad (1)$$

[0021] The voltage Vout1 is applied across the gate and the source of the MOSFET 1 as V_{GS1} . When the rate of change of the gate-source voltage V_{GS2} of the second MOSFET 2 is greater than the rate of change of the gate-source voltage V_{GS1} of the first MOSFET 1, the resistance R₁₁ of the resistor 11 is set to be greater than the resistance R₁₂ of the resistor 12, whereas when this relationship is reversed, the resistance R₁₁ is set to be less than the resistance R₁₂.

In the operational amplifier 6 the initial value of the gate to source voltage V_{GS2} of the second MOSFET 2 is set to match the initial value of the gate to source voltage V_{GS1} of the first MOSFET 1. Assuming that the resistance values of the resistors 13, 14, 15 and 16 are represented by R_{13} , R_{14} , R_{15} and R_{16} , respectively, the output voltage V_{out2} of the operational amplifier 6 is represented by the following formula:

$$V_{out2} = - (R_{16}/R_{15}) \times V_{out1} + R_{13} \times (R_{15} + R_{16}) \times V_1 / (R_{15} \times (R_{14} + R_{13}))$$

[0022] Assuming that R_{15} is equal to R_{16} in the right-hand side of the above formula, then

$$V_{out2} = - (R_{16}/R_{15}) \times V_{out1} + R_{13} \times (R_{15} + R_{16}) \times V_1 / (R_{15} \times (R_{14} + R_{13})) \quad (2)$$

$$= - V_{out1} + 2R_{13} \times V_1 / (R_{14} + R_{13})$$

Here, R_{13} and R_{14} are determined such that the initial value of the gate to source voltage V_{GS2} of the second MOSFET 2 matches the initial value of the gate to source voltage V_{GS1} of the first MOSFET 1.

[0023] From formulae (1) and (2) above, the voltage V_{out2} is expressed by the following formula (3):

$$V_{out2} = (R_{12}/R_{11}) \times V_{GS2} + 2R_{13} \times V_1 / (R_{14} + R_{13}) \quad (3)$$

Embodiment 2

[0024] A second embodiment of the present invention will be described in which the gate to source voltage V_{GS1} of the first MOSFET 1 is less than the gate to source voltage V_{GS2} of the second MOSFET 2.

[0025] Fig. 3 shows a circuit diagram of the second embodiment. In Fig. 3, like symbols as in Figs. 1 and 2 designate the like or corresponding parts or elements of the first embodiment, and hence a detailed description thereof will be omitted. Also, the operations of the second MOSFET 2 and the operational amplifiers 4, 5 of this embodiment are the same as those of Fig. 2, and thus a description thereof is omitted.

[0026] In the second embodiment, the connections of resistors connected to the input terminals of the operational amplifier 6 are different from those of the first embodiment. That is, in the first embodiment, the output terminal of the operational amplifier 5 is connected to the inverted amplification terminal of the operational amplifier 6 through the resistor 15, and the non-inverted amplification terminals of the operational amplifier 6 is connected to ground and the constant voltage terminal V_1 through the resistors 13, 14, respectively. On the other hand, in the second embodiment, the inverted amplification terminal of the operational amplifier 6 is connected to the output terminal of the operational amplifier 5 and the constant voltage terminal V_1 through the resistor 15 and the resistor 14, respectively.

[0027] Here, if the resistance R_{15} of the resistor 15 is assumed to be equal to the resistance R_{16} of the resistor 16, the output voltage V_{out2} of the operational amplifier 6 is expressed as follows:

$$V_{out2} = - R_{16} \times (V_{out1}/R_{15} + V_1/R_{14}) \quad (4)$$

$$= - V_{out1} - R_{16} \times V_1/R_{14}$$

[0028] Here, it is to be noted that the resistances R_{14} , R_{16} of the resistors 14, 16 are determined such that the gate to source voltage V_{GS2} of the second MOSFET 2 matches the gate to source voltage V_{GS1} of the first MOSFET 1. From formulae (1) and (4) above, the voltage V_{out2} is obtained as follows:

$$V_{out2} = R_{12} \times V_{GS2}/R_{11} - R_{16} \times V_1/R_{14} \quad (5)$$

[0029] As in Fig. 2, the voltage V_{out1} is applied across the gate to source of the first MOSFET 1 as V_{GS1} . Where a part of a MOSFET in the chip of the first MOSFET 1 is used as the second MOSFET 2, the secular change characteristics of the first and second MOSFETs 1 and 2 become the same, so in formulae (3) and (5) above, R_{11} can be made equal to R_{12} , and the voltage V_1 can be made equal to zero.

[0030] As can be seen from the above, using an inexpensive small-sized MOSFET, I_{DQ} can be held constant irrespective of a secular change in the first MOSFET 1, thus suppressing a variation in the characteristics of the amplifier circuit.

[0031] As described in detail in the foregoing, a MOSFET amplifier circuit according to the present invention comprises: a first MOSFET; a constant current circuit for generating a current of a constant magnitude; a second MOSFET having the constant current generated by the constant current circuit as a drain current; and a voltage control circuit for applying a gate-source voltage of the second MOSFET to a gate-source voltage of the first MOSFET. With this arrange-

ment, a variation in the drain current of the first MOSFET can be reduced or made constant, and by employing an inexpensive MOSFET for the second MOSFET for example, it is possible to provide the MOSFET amplifier circuit at a low cost, which is capable of compensating for the drain current to a constant value.

[0032] The second MOSFET in the MOSFET amplifier circuit may preferably be formed in a chip into which the first MOSFET is built, whereby the secular change characteristics of the first and second MOSFETs are made substantially the same, thus rendering the circuit design easy and simple.

[0033] While the invention has been described in terms of a few preferred embodiments, those skilled in the art will recognize that the invention can be practiced with modification within the spirit and scope of the appended claims.

Claims

1. A MOSFET amplifier circuit comprising:

a first MOSFET;
a constant current circuit for generating a current of a constant magnitude;
a second MOSFET having a constant drain current controlled by said constant current circuit; and
a voltage control circuit for applying a gate-source voltage of said second MOSFET to said first MOSFET as a gate-source voltage thereof.

2. The MOSFET amplifier circuit according to claim 1, wherein said second MOSFET comprises a MOSFET element formed in a chip into which said first MOSFET is built.

Fig. 1.

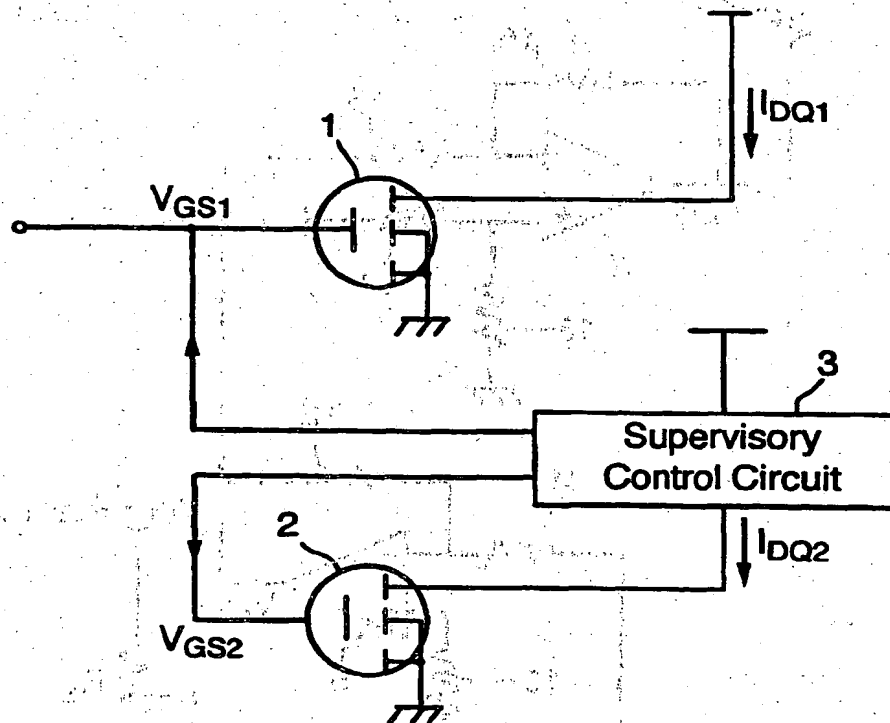


Fig.2.

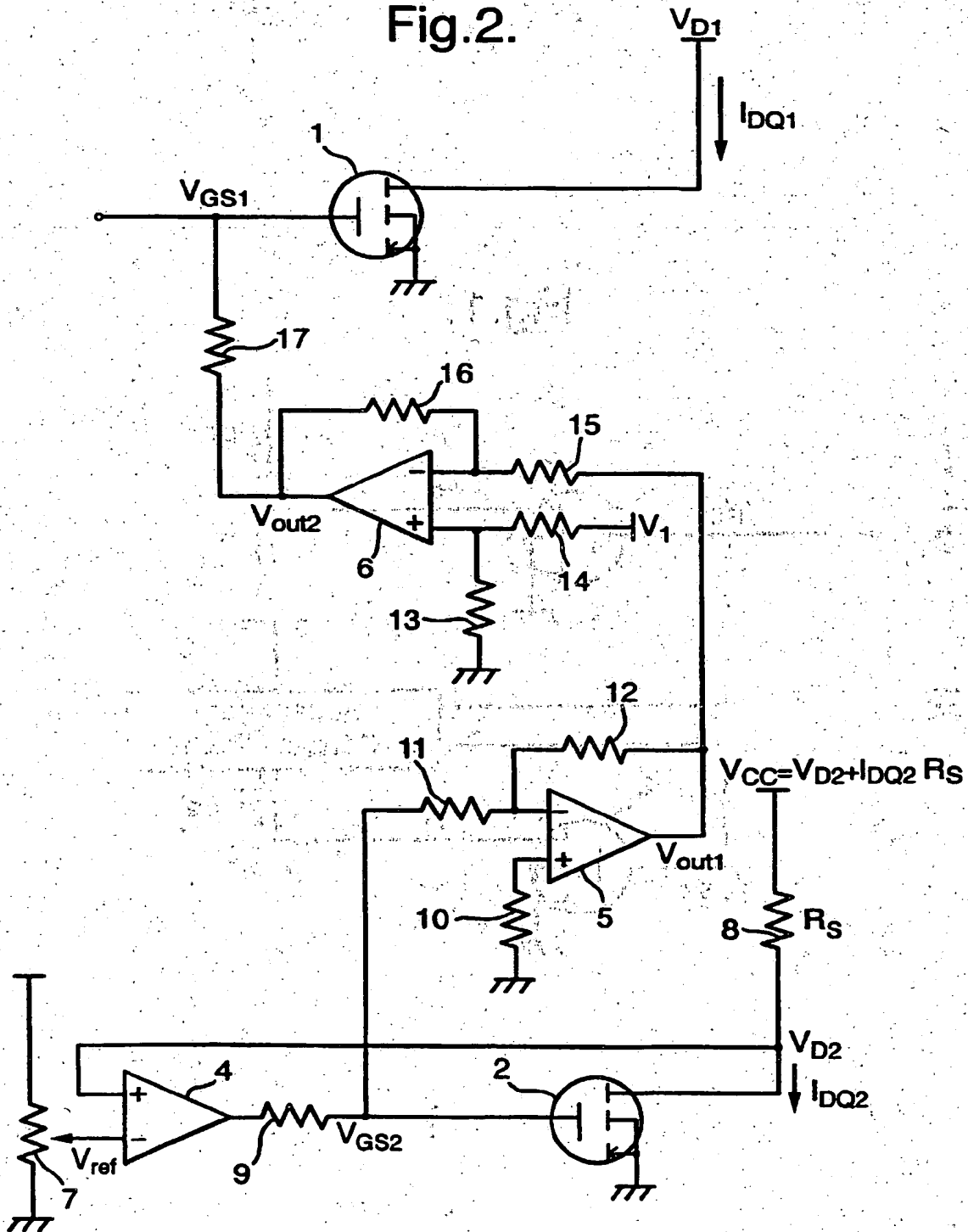


Fig.3.

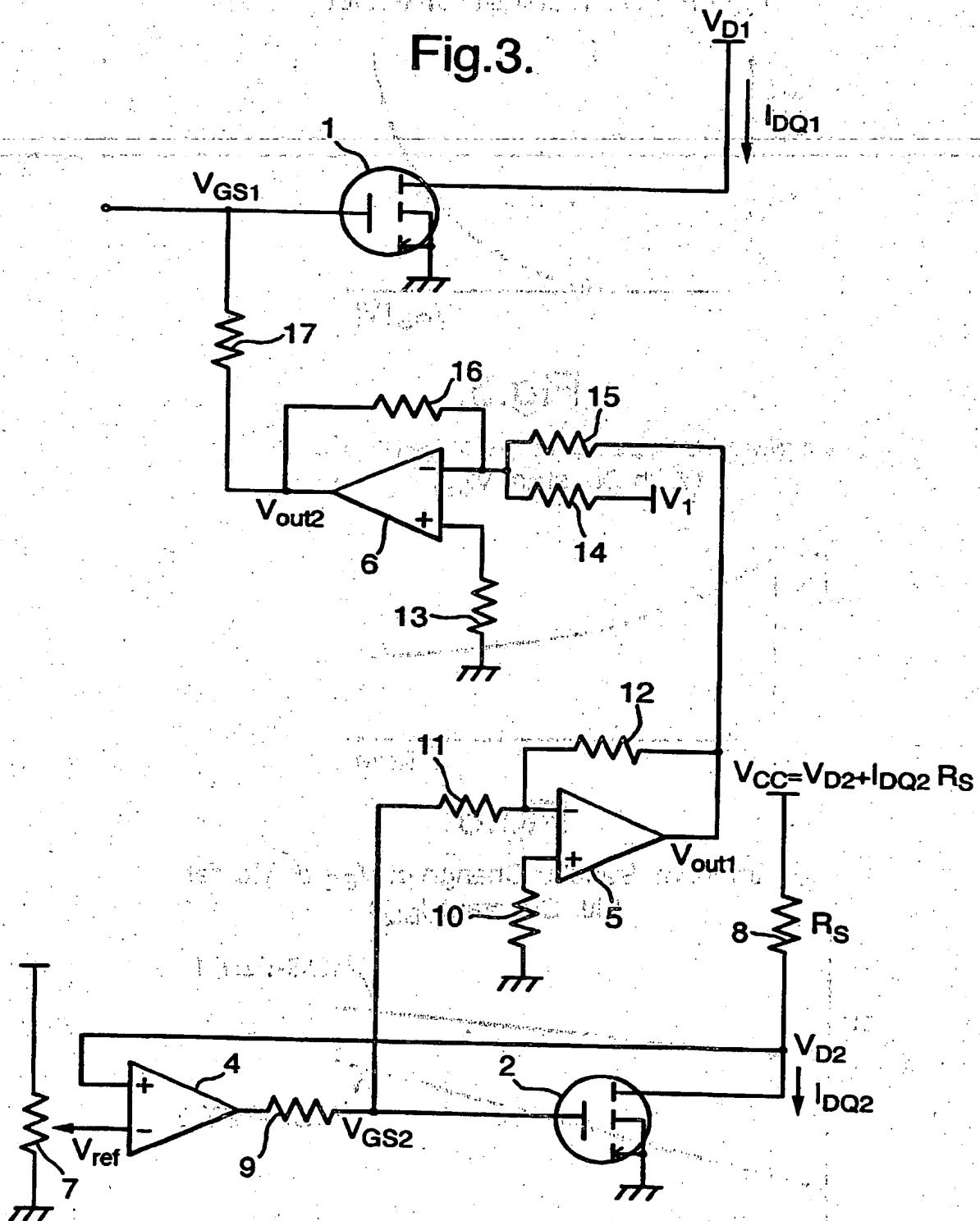
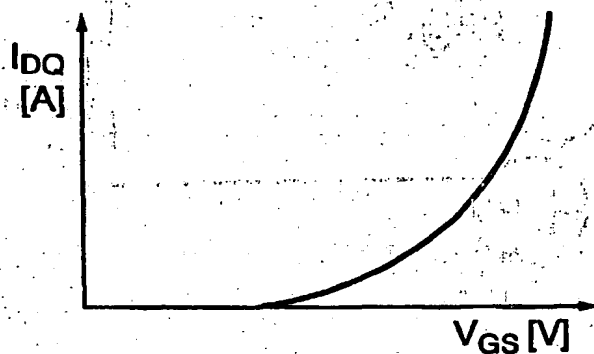
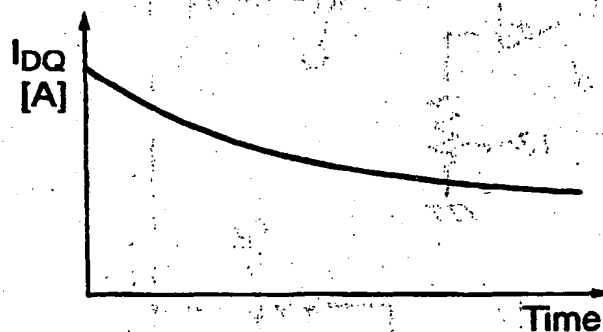
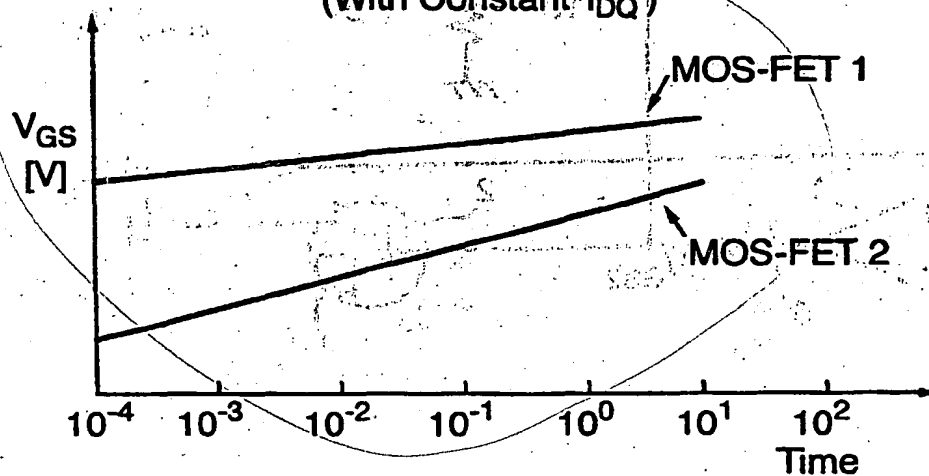


Fig.4. **$V_{GS} - I_{DQ}$ Characteristic of Mosfet****Fig.5.****Example of Secular Change of I_{DQ} of Mosfet
(With Constant V_{GS})****Fig.6.****Example of Secular Change of V_{GS} of Mosfet
(With Constant I_{DQ})**



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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number

EP 00 30 6266

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.7)
X	US 5 920 232 A (HARITON DAN ION) 6 July 1999 (1999-07-06) * column 1, line 66 - column 3, line 24; figure 1 * * column 3, line 40 - column 4, line 34 *	1,2	H03F1/30
X	US 4 340 867 A (SANO JUN-ICHI) 20 July 1982 (1982-07-20) * column 2, line 14 - column 3, line 59; figure 1 *	1,2	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.7)
			H03F
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 22 November 2000	Examiner Tyberghien, G
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ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.

EP 00 30 6266

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report. The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
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22-11-2000

Patent document cited in search report		Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
US 5920232	A	06-07-1999	NONE	
US 4340867	A	20-07-1982	NONE	

EPO FORM P0459

For more details about this annex : see Official Journal of the European Patent Office, No. 12/82

